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BIBLIOTHECA ABESSINICA

STUDIES CONCERNING THE
LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND HISTORY
OF ABYSSINIA

EDITED BY

Dr. E. LITTMANN

I.

THE LEGEND OF THE QUEEN OF
SHEBA IN THE TRADITION OF AXUM

BY THE EDITOR.

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E. J. BRILL

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YARABLI GIVVOON EWT

TO
R. SUNDSTRÖM
MISSIONARY AND SCHOLAR.

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P R E F A C E.

Under the title *Bibliotheca Abessinica* I hope to publish from time to time studies concerning the languages, the literatures and the history of Abyssinia. Each part will appear separately, not at fixed intervals, but whenever material is available and time for this work is at my disposal. The publication of this series has been made possible by the generosity of a friend of Princeton University and by the enterprise of the well-known publishing house of E. J. BRILL. To both I am therefore sincerely indebted.

Special attention will be paid to the languages and literatures of modern Abyssinia, a promising and interesting field, in which much still remains to be done, although of course the Ge'ez literature and language as well as the older history of the country are not to be excluded. The future numbers will probably contain an English translation of the Chronicle of King Theodore of Abyssinia, editions and translations of the ancient Amharic Songs of the Kings, of Harari wedding songs, and of a collection of Tigrē poetry. If possible, I shall also publish a grammar and a dictionary of the Tigrē language. ✓

For much of the material to be published in this series I am indebted to the man to whom this first number is dedicated, my friend R. SUNDSTRÖM of the Swedish Mission in the Colonia Eritrea. It is largely due to his indefatigable zeal in studying the people, to whom he brings a higher life and religion, that I have been encouraged to undertake this publication.

Toward the end of the year 1902 he sent me the text which is published here: I began to work on it at once, but found that without some further explanations from Herr SUNDSTRÖM several passages were unintelligible to me. I therefore sent him a copy of the manuscript and a tentative German translation, and after a time received back my copy together with a number of emendations and comments, and a translation of the whole in Swedish. Some differences between the first and the second copy and some of Herr SUNDSTRÖM's comments (marked S.) are given in the foot-notes.

Concerning the provenance of the legend Herr SUNDSTRÖM writes me, as follows: "The man who told me the story is of the Bet-Dyuk, a Tigrē tribe in the valley of the Anseba river, an hour north of Cheren. This man himself heard it told at Axum, when he was there seeking cure of a disease, from which he was suffering. But the man who wrote the story down for me at Gheleb is one of our evangelists of the Mensa tribe. The dialect of the Bet-Dyuk, however, is the same as that of the Mensa. It is very possible that the narrator changed the story in some respects according to his own ideas. Whether the appearance of Mary and the saints at the time of Solomon is due only to a mistake of the narrator, I can not state: the same is to be said of the mention of the cross, of the ark and the deacon at that time. It seems that the story was correctly reported, since it is told in almost the same way in Hamazēn. While travelling through this region I was shown the place where the Queen of Sheba is said to have given birth to her son. Not far from a village, Addi-Schmagali, a few hours northwest from Asmara, a large piece of gneiss rock is shown where the event is said to have occurred."

In my notes on the legend which form the second part

of this number I have tried to trace the different elements of this interesting story, but have not aimed at absolute completeness. It should be mentioned, however, that after the main part of this number was printed my friend Dr. CONTI ROSSINI called my attention to two versions of the present legend which had escaped my notice: the one, translated from the Arabic, was published by M. E. AMÉLINEAU on pp. 144—164, of his *Contes et Romans de l'Égypte Chrétienne*, Paris 1888, under the title “*Comment le royaume de David passa aux mains du roi d'Abyssinie*”; the other was reported by Captain R. PERINI in *La Rassegna Nazionale*. The former agrees with the Tigrē version in several respects, and among other details it mentions the fact that the Queen of Sheba had a goat's hoof, of which deformity she was healed in Jerusalem; PERINI's version is inaccessible to me. Again a short account of the legend is given in *La lista reale di Enda Yohannes*, on p. 3 of Dr. CONTI ROSSINI's *Ricordi di un soggiorno in Eritrea*, Asmara, 1903, which appeared after my manuscript had been sent to the printers. Dr. CONTI ROSSINI himself, who during his residence in the Colonia Eritrea made very extensive and important explorations notwithstanding his many official duties, collected interesting material concerning our legend also; he writes me that it is known everywhere in Northern Abyssinia among many different tribes and peoples, and therefore exists in a number of slightly different versions. His new material will undoubtedly contribute much toward the legend of the Abyssinian Queen of Sheba.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, January 1904.

E. LITTMANN.

I. THE LEGEND: TEXT AND TRANSLATION.

ስለመ-3 : 37-1 : እግል : 37-2 : የጊዜ.ለ.ካ : ከእር : ከም : ወልደያ :

i) First copy ልተገዘኝ.

2) First copy **ՓԼԴԴԸ :** ԱՀԱ.

3) Original gloss አንተለም : ሰምን : ገዢ : ተ : About the size of a
ለዢ see Guidi, *Vocabolario Amarico-Italiano* s. v.

4) First copy **መኢትዮጵት**; this was changed to **መኢትዮጵያ**. In an annotation S. writes: "Efter senare underrättelser bör det vara: **ኢትዮ፡ ቅዱ፡ ስ፡** och ej **መኢትዮጵያ**."

5) S.: förkortad: **ληστ** : **λη** : **λησ** = Eljast kunde subjektet **�**
ej vara utsatt.

6) First copy: **መ&ለ&ከ&ከ**.

HOW KING SOLOMON BEGAT KING MENELIK.

1. King Menelik's mother was a Tigrē girl named Etiyē-Azēb¹). And [in her days] the Tigrē people were worshipping a dragon, and the sacrifice which they brought [to him] was the following: each man among them gave in turn his first-born daughter and an *entalām*²) of mead and an *entalām*²) of milk to the dragon. 2. Now when the turn of Etiyē-Azēb's parents came, they tied her to a tree for the dragon. And to the place where she was tied to the tree came seven saints³) and seated themselves there in the shade. 3. And while they were sitting there in the shade, she began to weep, and one of her tears fell upon them. And when [this tear] had fallen upon them, they looked up and beheld her tied there, and they asked her saying: "What art thou? Art thou Mary⁴) or a human being?" 4. And she answered them: "I am a human being." They said to her: "And why art thou bound here?"

1) In English "Queen of the South", i. e., "Queen of Sheba".

2) This measure equals about 300 liters.

3) Var.: angels.

4) Var.: an angel.

ማ. : አቶ. : ታክስር. : በልዋ. : “ለ. እስለት : እግል : ታ-
ልዕት : አስረዕት : ተለም” 5. ሆቶም : “እ. : የ. : ለዕንከለ-
ት : ወከን : ማ. : የ. : ወለንዘ. : በልዋ. : “ሀ. : ማ. : ተለም”
6. ወከም : ለእዋ. : አብ. : መሬትም : ዓስመ. : የበት : ወአብ. : ገማ. :
“ገረመኬ. : በል. : ወአብ. : የ. የተለት. : “ንመናጠለ. : በል ያ. ከሆኩ. :
እንደ. : የደረ. : ሁነመ. : እታ. : ከእድመዕም : ወከለም : ታንጋዥ. :
እታ. : ከእብ. : መስቀል. : እያምዕዋ. : ከቀተለዋ. : 7. ወአት. : ለዋ-
ተለ. : ያም. : ነጥረ. : እታ. : ከእት. : ለስተኞች. : ነጥበት. : ወለስተኞች. :
ስተኞች. : እድግ. : ነት. : 8. አቀን. : ልተተዋ. : ከ“ን. : የ. : የደኩ. :”
በልዋ. : ወአት. : የ. : ከም. : መጽእት. : የ. : ሁሮ. : ለእስለት. : ከ-
ም. : ወተት. : እ. እመረዕ. : ከተኞነዋ. : ሁሮ. : በእት. : ለዕድ. : እት. :
አቱ. : ማመት. : ሰርጻት. : ከተመየት. : 9. አብ. : ልደረ. : መጽእ-
ቶም. : “ንደቀ. : እግል. : እርከብ. የ. : ተ. : ወተት. :” ተለም. : ወ-
ተም. : ያርብ. : ገሰው. : ወማይተት. : የንቀቶም. : 10. ወማይተት. :
ከም. : የንቀቶም. : “እ. : የ. የ. : ሁሮም. : ሁሮም. : ለበ. : ወአሁያ. : ማ. :
ወመተት. : የ. :” በልው. : ከይኖመዋ. : ወከም. : ታይኖመት. : ወለት. :
ከምስላኛ. : በለተንዘታ. : ወደ. ተ. :
11. ወአቀን. : አብ. : ያማም. : ስምዕት. : የ. ስ. : ስለመ. ተ. : ለልቦ-
ሎ. : እት. : የፈሰለም. : ለለ. : ከእቱ. : ለለስ. : የ. : ለዕለ. : እለ. : ዕድ-
ር. : ለተሳረ. : 12. “ከም. : ተግይለ. : ለእፈራቱ. : ከም. : ከደኩ. :
እለማር. : ከም. : የ. : ወአቀበለት. : እልከ. :” በልዋ. : 13. ወ-
ሁሮ. : ከም. : ስምዕት. : ለረከብ. : የርብ. :¹⁾ ገደለት. : እናብ. : እግል. :

1) S.: *uttalas ʃarəbbə* = *flätor* *gående* *från* *pannan* *bakåt* *nacken*, *tätt* *ligande* *vid* *huvudsvälven*, i. e., braids going from the forehead backwards to the neck, lying close to the skin.

"They have bound me in order that that dragon may devour me," said she. **5.** They asked her: "Is he on the other side of the hill or on this side?" "He is [the hill]" was her answer. **6.** And when they saw him, Abbā-Čahamā grasped his beard ¹⁾, and Abbā Garīmā said: "He has frightened me ²⁾," and Abbā Menṭelīt said: "Let us seize him ³⁾" and running he threw himself upon him and smote him. Thereupon all of them attacked him and struck him with the cross and killed him. **7.** And when they were killing him, blood trickled on her, and it dropped on her heel, and her heel became an ass's heel. **8.** After that they freed her and said unto her: "Go now to thy village." And when she came to her village, the people of her village not knowing that the dragon was dead, drove her away. Outside of the village she climbed a tree and stayed there over night. **9.** The next day she went [back] to them saying: "Come ye, and let me shew you that he is dead." So they followed her, and [the dragon] appeared lying dead before them. **10.** And when they saw him lying dead, they said: "Let us make her [our] chief! For if God had not given this to her, how could [the dragon] have met his death through her?", and they made her their chief. And after she had become chief, she made a girl like herself [her] minister.

11. Thereupon she heard that [the following] was reported: In Jerusalem there is a king named Solomon; whosoever goes to him, is cured of the disease which he has. **12.** "If thou shouldst go, as soon as thou shouldst enter his door, thy foot would become as it was before" was said to her. **13.** After she had heard this, she braided her hair so that she resembled a man; [and her minister did the same]. Then

1) Play on words; in Tigrē *šēhēmū*. 2) *garramani*.

3) *nēmanāṭalā*.

ትተመሰል : ከምስል : ለበለታንታታγ : ገራዳγ : ተጠንዳቀት : ወን
 ስት : 14. ወከም : ያናት : ገንሰ : ስለመ-ን : ስምዕ : “ገንሰ : ከ
 ሰሳ : ማሻሻል : ህል :” በለም : ወሁፍ : “እቴ : ህል :” በለ : ወከምስል
 ል : መሻሻለት : ከለከራዕት : ከም : ከደት : ለእግዥ : ከም : በኋራ :
 እቅበለት : 15. ወከት : ገንሰ : እቴት : ወእምሃ : ከሰሻት : ከን
 ገ- : “እንደራ : ¹⁾ ስር : ወማሰ : ከምሻ.እ :” በለ : ከእግል : ለጠ
 ሌዕ : ተጠንለው : ወከት : ለበለ-ዕ : ለተን : እብ : ከቅለት : ሲ-ድ :
 የን : ነበራ : በለዕያ : ወከ-ድ : የን : ለስተኞ : ስተኞ : ወለንጠ-ሰ :
 ት-ካዘበየን : እዋልድ : እንሰ : ከም : ተን : 16. ከምድር : ከም :
 መሰ : “በራ-ተን : እናለ : እለን :” በለ : ወቅበለት : እድ : እት :
 ሲቴ : በት : እናለው : እለም : 17. ወሁፍ : ቁርበት : መዕር :
 ነሰአ : ከእት : ለበት : ስቅለያ : ወምን : ት-ክት : ሪ-ክን : ከረ : እ
 ሊ : ከመርቀት : መቅ : እግል : ተብል : 18. ከሁፍ : ስከብ : የን :
 ገበአ : ለዕንታዕ : ል-ዘብ : ወቅንድ : የን : ገበአ : ሪም : ለበለ :
 ህለ : 19. ከለለ : እት : ለሰከብ : ሁፍ : ቁና : ከለዕንታዕ : ል-ዘ
 ወሁተን : “እ-ሰከብ : ል-ዘብ : ህለ :” በለያ : “ከም : ያል : ስከብ :”
 ከለና : እት : ለ-በለ : ሁፍ : ል-ዘብ : ከለዕንታዕ : ሪም : እበለ : ወሁ
 ተን : “ስከብ : ገይ-ም :” በለያ : ከምን : ለ-ክ-ክ : ለ-ክ-ይ : ወሁፍ :
 ከመረ : በን : እዋልድ : እንሰ : ከም : ተን : 20. ከእግል : ከል
 እ-ተን : ሪ-ክ : ወምስለን : ስከብ : ከል : የን : “እናይ : ያምብ :
 ተ :” በለዕያ : ወከግል : ከል : የን : የን : ወርቅ : ወመርዕድ :
 ለበየን : ከ“መለት : እት : የን : ገበአ : እለ : የን : ወርቅ : እ
 ገ-ድ : ወ-በ-ት : ት-ምሻ-እ-እ : ወ-እ-ድ : እ : የን : ገበአ : እለ : መ
 መድ : እንድ : ወ-በ-ት : ለ-ምሻ-እ-እ :” በለን : ወንማሰት : እነብ :
 የን-የት : ት-አበ-ት : ወ-እ-ድ : በምሻ-ይ : በይ-ን : እቅበለያ :”

1) Original copy ከበራ “meal in general”; S. adds that ከንደራ would be better.

she and her minister girded themselves with saber[s] and went away. **14.** When she was approaching, King Solomon heard [of her]; it was said to him: "The King of Abyssinia is coming." "Bid him enter!" said he. And when she came, as soon as she entered the door, her foot became as it was before. **15.** And she entered to the king and grasped his hand, [greeting him]. The king ordered: "Bring bread, meat and mead!", and they sat down to eat. And while they were eating, the [women] out of modesty ate (little of the meal) and drank little (of the beverage). So the king suspected that they were women. **16.** When it grew evening, he gave order: "Make their beds for them!", and in one and the same room [with him] they made them, one opposite the other. **17.** And he took a skin with honey and hung it up in the room, and he put a bowl under it; also he made a hole in it (i. e., the skin), so that it would trickle. **18.** Now it was his custom, when he was sleeping, to keep his eyes half open, and when he was awake, to close them. **19.** At night, while they were resting, he fell asleep, and his eyes were half open. And the women said: "He does not sleep; he sees [us]. When will he sleep?" While they spoke thus, he awoke, and closed his eyes. "Now he has fallen asleep" they said and began to lick from the bowl. So he knew [certainly] that they were women. **20.** And he approached them both and slept with them. Each one of them said to him: "My deflowering has been accomplished ¹⁾)." And he gave each one of them a staff of silver and a ring, saying unto them: "If it is a girl, let her take this staff of silver and come to me; and if it is a boy, let him take this ring and come to me." And the Queen of the South bought a mirror. And being [both] with child they returned to their country.

1) Literally: This means the purification from my flowers.

21. ወከልኩ.ተን : ከልአቶ : አብን : ወልደም : ከከም : ሰበው : ሰብ : ተግራይ : “ው-ለድ : አብቃ : ለእለቦም : ቅም :” በለው : ወሁም : እማቶም : ተስለለው : ወለማቶም : “እብት-ም : ጽንሰ : ሰለሙ-ን : ቅ : እት : የፋሳለም : ህለ :” በለይሁም : 22. ከንግድት : አነብ-ሁ : ለውልኩ : አብሁ : መስል : ተማም : እብ : አብኩ : እት : ጽንሰ : ሰለሙ-ን : ደግረ : ወተለ : “ውልኩ : አብት : እልከ : መስል : ከእለ : መበራይት : እንዳ : እስከኩ : ገለ : ሁኔታ : በፈራይ : ¹⁾ ቅ : ልተትአብ : ቅ : የምትከ : ወለማል : በበድ : እት : ወራት : የም : ይንቀስ : ሰለም : እራትበለ :” ተለ : 23. ወሀቶም : እስከ : የፋሳለም : ሰሰው : ወከም : እተው : ጽንሰ : ሰለሙ-ን : “ው-ለድ : ጽው : የበት : እንዳይ : ለተረከየ-ም : 24. ወሐቅ : ለሰለስ : ተል : “አክ-ተው :” በለ : ከሁቁ : ለበት : እንዳ : ከረ : የምዓት : ለበት : የም : ለአድመ : እተገለ : እት : ከእት : ወረ : ²⁾ ለእጥፋት : በእ : 25. ወከም : እተው : ለሆይ : እኩ : ለእጥፋት : እት : ለዕት : ገዕይ : እስከ : ወምለለኩ : እተ : ጽንሰ : በጥረ : ከእሁ : ለመበራይት : ገዕ : ለእ : ወከም : አብኩ : እንከ : እቶ : ወለት : ከለም : ትወለበ : ወከብኩ : ለመስል : እረከበበ : 26. ወሐር : ሰለሙ-ን : እብ : ወረ : ለእጥፋት : ለጥም : በለ : ወእንዳ : ጽሰ : እኩሁ : እስከ : ወሰለሙ-ን : “ውልኩ : ወድ : እማንያብ : ወለሁያመ : ወፈው : ቅ : ይኩ : ጽው : እኩ : ወእኩን :” በለ : ወእት : ለራ-ቁ : ከፍ : በለ : 27. ከእብ-ሁ : “አያይት : እት : ገርሁት : በእት : የም : ጽበት : በዕል : ለገርሁት : ለአያይት : ለማይ-ዕ :” በለ : ሁቁ : ለተ : ሰለ :

i) S.: "mäkta klok".

21. And both of them gave birth to a son. When the boys were grown, the Tigré people said: "They are fatherless children." And they asked their mothers. And their mothers answered them: "Your father is King Solomon; he lives in Jerusalem." **22.** And the son of the Queen of the South resembled his father perfectly, [even] in his colour he was like King Solomon. Now she said to him: "My son, thy father resembles thee. Take this mirror and go [to him]; for he is very shrewd: he will hide himself from thee. And if thou seest another man sitting on the throne, do not greet him!" **23.** Then they went to Jerusalem. And when they arrived, King Solomon said: "If they are my sons, let them wait!" So he stayed away from them three years, without showing himself to them. **24.** After these three years he said: "Let them come in"; but he had taken off his royal garment and dressed himself in rags; and on his throne he had seated one of his people, and he [himself] had gone into the stable. **25.** And when they entered, the other boy grasped the hand of the man who was sitting on the throne, [to greet him]: but Menelik stood [still and] straight and looked at his face in the mirror and [saw that] the man's colour was not like his. Then he turned in all [directions], but did not find any one whose colour was like his. **26.** After a while Solomon looked out from the stable: [at once Menelik] went to him and took his hand [to greet him]. Then said Solomon: "[Thou art] my true son; the other is my son too, but he is a fool¹⁾", and he seated himself on his throne.

27. Now his father used to say: "If cattle enter into a[nother man's] field, let the proprietor of the field confiscate the cattle!" But he said: "Let the proprietor of

1) S.: *en dumsnut.*

ԾԱԼ : ԱՅՀԻ : ՈԹԱ : ԼՂԸՄԴ :” ԱԼ : ԻՓՑՅ : “ ՀԵՅՅԴ : Ի
ՀԵ : ԴԴԻՅՅՈ :” ՀՅՅՅ : ԱԼ : 28. ՄԺԿԴ : ԾՈ : ԾՅ : ՀԴ :
ԼՅԴՆ : ՄԸՄՈՎ : “ ԻՀԵ : ԻՃԱՒ : Ծ-Յ : ԴԴ-ԾՅՎ : ՀԴԿ :
ՀԱ : ՄՃԻՀ : ԾՅ : ՅՃՀ : ԹՅՅ :” ԱԼՄ : ԻԴԴՆ : ՍԲ :
“ ԻՊԱՅ-Հ : ԻՄ : ՄԻՄ : ՂՄՅԻ : ՀՈՒԱԽ-Յ :” ԱԼՄ : “ ՂՄՅ : ”
ԱԼՄ : ՄԽԴ : ՄՃԻ : ՀՈՒԱԽ : “ ՄՃԻ : ՅՃՀ : ԹՅՅ : ”
ՀՅՅՅ : ԱԼՄ : ՄԸՄՈՎ : ՀԵ : ԻՍԼՄ : ՀԱ : “ Ղ : ՆՅ : ”
ԱԼՅ : 29. ՄՒ : ՍԲ : ԱԼՅ : “ ԻՀԿ : ՈԼՄ : ՀԿՄ : ՄՅ :
ՊԻԾՔ : Ֆ : Հ.ԻՆ : ՄՅ : ՊԻԾՔ-Յ : ՍԸԸ : ԹՅԱԼ : ՈԼՄ : ”
ԱԼՅ : ՄՃԴՆ : ՀԿ : ԱՅՅ : ԱԼՅ : ԱԼ : “ ԻՀԿ : ՄՅ : ՊԻԾՔ :
Ֆ : Հ.ԻՆ : ՀԴՖ-ՅՄ : ՄՅ : ՊԻԾՔ-Յ : ՍԸԸ : ԹՅԱԼ : ՈԼՄ : ”
ԹՄ : Մ “ ԻԸ : Ժ : ” ԱԼՄ : ՄԻՃ : ԹՅԳ-Յ : ՄՅ : ՊԻԿ : ՍՀԸ :
ԹՅԱԼ : ”

30. ՄՃԼՄ-Յ : ՅԴՆ : ՀԿ : ՄՃԻ : ՄՃԻ : ԹՅԻԽԱ :
ՅՀԻ :” ԱԼՅ : ՍՒ : ՍԲ : ԱՄՅՈՒ : ՄԿՅՅ : ՆՈՒ : ԻՃԱՈՒ : Ա
ՄՅՈՒ : ՄԿՅՅ : ՀԿ : ԱՄՅՈՒ : ԹՅԻԽԱ : ՀՃԱՈՒՅ : ՄՃԿՅ :
ԹՅԻԽԱ : ՀԿ : ՄԿՅՅ : ԻՄՅՈՒ : ՀՅՅՅ : ՆՈՒ : ՅՈՒ : 31. Ժ
Ք : ՂՅ : ԻԹՈՆՀԻ : ՔԿ-ԾՈՄ : ՄՃՄԱ : Ի-Ո : ՀՈՒՅ : ՄՃԱ
ՄՈ-Յ : “ ՄՅՈՒ : ՄԿՅՅ : ՀԿՄ : ” ԱԼ : ՄԹՅՅ : ՀԿՄ : “ ՍԼ-Դ : ”
ԱԼՄ : ՀՅՅՅ : ՓԱԾ : ԱՃՈՒ : ԱՊ : ԹՅՅ : ՀԿՄ : ՍՒ : ՍԲ :
“ ՓԱԾՓ : ԻՀԿՄ : ” ԱԼՄ : ՄԿՅՅ : ՓԱՅՈՎ : ԹՅՅ : ՀԿՄ :
ՄՅՈՒ : ԹՅԻԽԱ : ՀՅՅՅ-ՅՄ : ՄՃԿԻ : ՆՅՀ : ՀԴ : ՄՃԻ :
“ ԱԼՈՒ : ՀԵ : ” ՀՅՅՅ : ԱԼՅ : ԲՀՄ : ՍՒ : ՀՈՒ : 32. ԻՀԿ : Փ
ՅՆ : ԻԸ : ԻՄ : ՈԶ-Ժ : ՄՅՈՒ : ՀՄ-Ը : ԱՄԸ : Բ-ՖՅ : ԴՈՀ :
ՀԵՄՈՒ : ԱՄ-ԱՄԸ : ԹՄ : ՄՆԺ : ԴՓՈՒ : ՄՆԸ : ՀԴ : Ի
Մ : ՓՈՀՄ : ՀԿ : ԱՄԸ : Ա.ՄԸ : ՄԻՄ : ԲՀՄ : ԱՄՅՈՒ : ՓՆՅ :

the field take six measures of grain" and rebuked [his father] asking: "How can the cattle be confiscated?" **28.** Thereupon the people of the town complained to the king, saying: "How could two chiefs rule over us? This thy son send away from us to his country!" "Let me at least take counsel, and when I have done so, I will let you know" replied the king. "Take counsel" said they. And he told this to his son, saying: "They have complained to me saying: send thy son away from us, and they continue [to do so]. What shall we do now?" **29.** Then he answered him: "Speak thus to them: 'Is he not my first born son? Send ye your first born son[s] with him!'" So the king said to the people of the town: "Is he not my first born son? Send ye also your first born son[s] with him!" "It is well" they said, and each one of them sent his first born son with him."

30. And King Solomon said to his son: "Take the ark of Michael [with thee]!" But he took the ark of Mary; and the cover of Mary's ark he put on Michael's ark, and the one of Michael['s ark he put] on [the ark of] Mary. And taking his ark he went away. **31.** After a few days a storm rose in Jerusalem, and Solomon said: "Look for Mary's ark!" And when they had looked, without taking off the cover, only having looked [at it], they said: "It is there." But he repeated: "Take the cover off and look!" And when they took the cover off and looked [at it], the ark of Michael appeared before them. And he sent a messenger to his son saying: "Send it back to me!"; but he refused. **32.** Now when they came to Qayēh-Kōr, a deacon named Gabra Heywat, who was carrying the ark, died, and was buried there. And when they had buried him there, they intended to march onward; but the ark could not ¹⁾ be lifted. Then

1) Literally: refused.

አበት : አለም : ሆኖ : ሆኖ ይ “አይር : ከለግኝነት : እት : ሰንድ-ቁ : ደዋ :” ሆለ : ወስኩረም : ከለግኝነት : እት : ሰንድ-ቁ : ወደዋ : 33. ወእግል : ለጋሳ : ምን : ቁስው : ሆኖ : ቁኝ : አበት : ከእብ : ደግማን : ሆኖ ይ “አይር :” ሆለ : ወስኩረው : ወቁ-በዕቂ : ¹⁾ ለተዕው : ወእግል : ለሰንድ-ቁ : እተዋ :

34. አቅሬ : ለታቦት : ቁንጻት : ወንሰው : ከተግራይ : ተօደዣ : ወጥግራይ : ከም : ተօደዣ : እት : ከከተም : መጽእዣው : ወጪማን : ምስል : ለበ : እግል : ለተኩረድ : በት : ነድቁ : ዓንቀ : ከ“ማርያም : መጽእትኩ :” ምን : ሆለም : ለበረድ : ከአደገኛ : 35. ወስቱ : እበነት : ለያም : ብት : እግል : ለያ-ሸ : ተከለያ : ወ “መጽእትኩ :” ምን : ሆለም : ሁድ-ገኛ : ከረሰ : ወለእበን : ለእሉ : ነድቁ : ዓንቀ : እግል : ማርያም : ብት : ከስታን : ነድቁው : ብ : ወለእበነት : ለያም : ብት : እበት : እኔ : ተተክል : ሆለት :

1) First copy **ወለቁ-በዕቂ**. S.: **ቁ-በዕቂት** hör till barnspråket. Ordet heter **ቁ-በዕቂ**:

he (i. e., Menelik) said: "Dig him up and lay his body in a coffin;" and they dug him up and laid his body in a coffin.

33. But when they would have marched onward, [the ark] could not yet¹⁾ be lifted. And again he said: "Dig up", and they dug up and found his finger [sticking out of the coffin]. So they put it within the coffin.

34. Thereupon the ark was lifted, and they went on and entered Tigray. And after they had entered Tigray, they came to Axum. Now Satan was building a house in order to fight against God. But when they said: "Mary has come to thee", he destroyed it and left it. **35.** [There was] one big stone [which] he had raised in order to carry it, but when they said: "She has come to thee", he left it and went away. And with those stones with which he had been building, they built a church for Mary. But the big stone is standing [there] upright even today.

1) Literally: refused again.

II. NOTES ON THE LEGEND.

The story of the Queen of Sheba, as we find it in this modern form, contains a number of different elements, the majority of which however must have been connected with this legend for many centuries. It is undoubtedly based on the same tradition that found its literary expression in Chapters XIX sqq. of the famous *Kebra Nagast*¹⁾. But here, as Rösch has very justly stated in *Jahrb. f. protest. Theol.* 1880, p. 555, the story is told from the standpoint of a rationalistic purism, whereas in this new Tigrē version we find some traits which seem to be more original than those in the *Kebra Nagast*: these elements, to my mind, have been handed down partly by oral tradition and must have been known in Abyssinia even at the time when the literary rationalistic version was composed, and only to a very small extent they may have been influenced later by Arabic legends concerning Queen Bilqīs. At the same time the whole has been interwoven with several local Abyssinian traditions, which probably belonged originally to different cycles of legends. But everything has been put here in chronological order and arranged according to a certain system, which, although being in itself as anachronistic as possible, has produced a

1) Professor Bezold's edition and translation of this important work is now in the press.

natural sequence of the events and thus given to the story the appearance of being a single connected narrative.

The Tigrē legend agrees with the story of the *Kebra Nagast* in the following points: 1) The "Queen of Sheba" or the "Queen of the South" ¹⁾ was an Abyssinian princess. It is known that in popular tradition the court of this queen was connected with a certain locality in the province of Tigrē, called Dabra Mākēdā ²⁾. 2) The Queen of Sheba while in Jerusalem slept with Solomon in the same room where their marriage was consummated. In the *Kebra Nagast* Solomon puts a vessel with water in the room; from this the queen drinks and thus breaks her oath not to touch any of the King's property, so that in turn Solomon becomes free of his oath not to touch her. This episode is probably reflected in the skin with honey which according to the present version Solomon hangs up in the room; but the purpose of this incident has been changed, since another trait, viz. the distinction between male and female, (see below) has been introduced. However, our story is partly in close keeping with the *Kebra Nagast* with regard to the description of the events of this night. This will be shown by the following parallel columns:

<i>Tigrē-Version.</i>	<i>Kebra Nagast.</i>
Vs. 16. ... and in one and the same room they made them (viz., their beds), one opposite the other.	Ch. 30:5 ... and the king ascended on his bed on one side, and for her they prepared a bed on the other side.
Vs. 19. And the women said:	

1) የዕለታዊ ክሳብ = ἡ βασιλίσσα τοῦ νότου; cf. Matth. 12:42; Luke 11:31.

2) Cf. Praetorius, *Fabula de regina Sabaea apud Aethiopes*, p. 29, ann. 3.

"He does not sleep; he sees us. When will he sleep?" While they spoke thus, he awoke and closed his eyes. "Now he has fallen asleep" they said.

Ch. 30:7. . . . and she looked at the king Solomon, and it seemed to her that he was sound asleep.

3) When the Queen departed, Solomon gave her his ring as a token for her son, if she should bring forth a male child. This is of course a very common feature of folktales, and many parallels could be cited from other literatures. 4) The son of the Queen, Menelik, went back to Jerusalem and when leaving his father to return to Abyssinia, he took many of the noble Hebrew youth with him. 5) The "ark" of the temple of Jerusalem was stolen by Menelik and brought to Axum. The details about this theft, about Mary's ark and Michael's ark, which do not occur in the *Kebrä Nagast*, probably contain old tradition, but they seem to be a later addition to this story.

As regards the differences between the Tigrē legend and the *Kebrä Nagast*, the mere presence of the ass's heel shows us that the person of the Queen in the former has preserved some very ancient traits. Furthermore we notice that several cycles of Abyssinian legends have contributed to make up the present form: 1) the legend of the dragon or serpent; 2) the legend, or rather partly historical tradition of the seven — originally nine — saints; 3) the legend of the buildings and obelisks at Axum. Of these, as we shall see below, nos. 1 and 2 have been connected with each other for at least 400 or 500 years; but it is here that we find both of them in connection with the story of the Queen of Sheba for the first time.

The legends of the dragon and of the saints.
(Verses 1—10).

The legends and myths of dragons and serpents are common to almost all peoples of the world. I need scarcely cite all the Indo-European parallels; for it is well known that from India to Ireland almost everywhere the dragon plays a great rôle in folklore. Usually the dragon receives maidens as tribute, or he himself carries off the girls of the country: then a hero comes and kills the monster. As to the details in these legends it may suffice to quote Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, Berlin 1876, pp. 569 sqq., 817 sq., 833 sq.; Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, II, Berlin 1877, pp. 53 sqq. Very instructive are the two Afghan tales published by P. Lerch in *Orient und Occident* I, pp. 751—4 as *Ein Beitrag zu den Localsagen über Drachenkämpfe*. Also in China and Mexico dragon stories are very common.

Among the Semitic peoples dragons and serpents have always been very prominent in mythology and in folklore. The Babylonian dragon myth¹⁾ is well known: it is even reflected in many passages of the Old and New Testaments. Moreover the serpents have been very important in the demonology of Semitic heathendom²⁾. In Abyssinia especially, with Semitic as well as with Kushitic peoples, we find a great many superstitions relating to serpents. Many of them have been reported by Paulitschke in his various works on the peoples in southern North-East Africa. Furthermore Cecchi³⁾ tells us that when the pilgrims of the Galla sect

1) Cf. Cheyne in *Encyclopaedia Biblica* I, coll. 1131—34.

2) Cf. among others Nöldeke, *Die Schlange nach arabischem Volksglauben* in *Zeitschr. f. Völkerpsychol. u. Sprachwiss.* I, pp. 412 sqq.; *Encyclop. Bibl.* IV s. v. Serpents; Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*², pp. 152 sqq.

3) *Fünf Jahre in Ostafrika* (German translation) p. 50.

of Abba Muda arrive at the cave of their chief, where he lives with the serpent, they first offer with prayers a sacrificial meal to the serpent and then receive Abba Muda's blessing. All this belongs to the religious sphere and might more or less be called a cult of serpents. But the best known Abyssinian serpent legend is the one of King Arwē ("serpent"), whom the people place at the beginning of their history, in a similar way as the first king of Edessa is said to be the son of a serpent, **፳፻፻ ፭፻ ,መንፈሻ**¹⁾. Here the tradition applies, as it were, to the political sphere. But the two spheres are by no means kept separate. In almost all forms, in which we know this tradition, we hear not only that Arwē was king, but also that the people worshipped him. Thus Ludolf's Ethiopic friend Gregorius told him: *traditionem antiquam inter suos esse vetustissimos Aethiopum ingentem serpentem pro Deo coluisse: atque hinc esse, quod quidam Arwaeum pro primo Rege habeant: illum autem a quodam አንጻብ፡ Angabo occisum, qui ob audax hoc facinus Rex creatus, successores habuerit Sabanutum et Gedurum*²⁾. It is therefore interesting to note also that in the Tigrē Version vs. 1 the first copy said **አተገኘኩ** "were ruled by", which in the second was changed to **ለመለከ** "worshipped him", and that here the dragon (**እኩዎች**) is female³⁾. This legend of the King Serpent at the beginning of Abyssinian history is given in Ethiopic sources as well as by European travellers. Of the former may be mentioned here: the lists of Abyssinian kings published by Dillmann in Z.D.M.G., VII, pp. 341 sqq., and the chronicle published with translation

1) Duval, *Histoire d'Édessa*, pp. 21, 31, 37 sq.

2) Ludolf, *Historia Aethiopica* L. II. c. 2.

3) Cf. W. H. Ward in *Amer. Journ. of Sem. Lang. and Litt.*, Jan. 1898, pp. 94 sqq.

and very copious notes by Basset, in his *Études sur l'histoire d'Éthiopie*¹). For the latter see the interesting discussion of "A lenda da Arve" by F. M. E. Pereira in his *Historia dos Martyres de Nagran*, Lissabon 1899, pp. L sqq.

It seems to me that that version which places Arwē at the beginning of the history of Abyssinia is the most original one, and that in later times popular Christian tradition tried to connect this old legend in some way with Christian personalities so that the deliverance of the nation from the great evil should be owed to Christian heroes. In exactly the same way the Afghan story of the dragon makes the Muhammedan hero Ali the slayer of the monster and thus the deliverer of the country²). For this purpose the Christian Abyssinians chose the nine saints, who came to the country about the year 500 A. D., to develop Christianity there, and about whose names many legends grew up in the sequel. Their names are as follows: 1) Za-Mīkā'ēl Aragāwī; 2) Panṭalēōn; 3) Isaac Garīmā; 4) Afṣē; 5) Gūbā; 6) Alēf, sometimes called 'Ōṣ; 7) Maṭā^c or Yem^cātā; 8) Liqānōs; 9) Şehmā. The first three are the best known and most renowned; indeed, as far as we know, the *vitae* of these three only are extant: the *vita* of Aragāwī was published by Guidi, that of Panṭalēōn is contained in a manuscript of the d'Abbadie collection, that of Garīmā was edited by Conti Rossini. Again two of the first three and, curiously enough, the last one are given by name in the Tigrē legend; for I do not hesitate to identify Abbā Menṭelīt (vs. 6), the saint who first struck the dragon, with Abbā Panṭalēōn, and I believe

1) Cf. especially the first annotation (*Journ. Asiatique*, VII^{me} Série, Tome 17, 1881, p. 414).

2) See P. Lerch, *Orient und Occident*, I, p. 753. Many parallels to this occurrence might be quoted from other countries.

that the transformation of this name to *Menṭelit* may be due only to popular etymology (*nēmanāṭalā*, see above p. 5). More particulars about the nine saints are to be found in an article published by Dillmann, "Zur Geschichte des Axumischen Reiches im 4.—6. Jahrhundert" ¹⁾, pp. 24—27. That most of these monks or saints came very probably from Syria, perhaps by the way of Southern Arabia, was shown by Guidi, *Le Traduzioni degli Evangelii in Arabo e in Etiopico*, Rome 1888, p. 33, annot., and by Hackspill in *Zeitschr. f. Assyriol.* XI, pp. 153 sqq.

The reason why these nine saints were made the deliverers from the serpent does not seem to be accidental. For it is not only very natural that men, who were as famous as these should be considered performers of almost every great deed, but we know also that in the lives of Abyssinian saints snakes and serpents occur very often. Thus for instance in the life of Za-Mikā'ēl Aragāwī, one of the leaders of these very nine saints, we read that a serpent sixty cubits long carried the saint up to a high mountain ²⁾. That Arwē was killed through the intervention of the nine saints, is mentioned several times in Abyssinian literature. One of these passages is a hymn in honour of Za-Mikā'ēl Aragāwī, which is given by Ludolf in his *Historia Aethiopica* L. III. c. 3, and of which I enclose here a translation:

Hail to Mikā'ēl, who was called Aragāwī:
 For he walked in wisdom and his ways were prudence;
 With him was [God], who is [tri]une (in one nature).
 Hail to the saints, who united in concord,
 By prayer to destroy the reign of Arwē.

1) *Abhandl. Berl. Akad.* 1880.

2) Guidi, *Il "Gadla Aragāwī"*, Roma, Acc. dei Lincei, 1895, p. 16; small edition, ib. 1896, pp. ፩፻ sqq.

The most detailed form, however, in which this legend occurs is found in the homily on Abbā Garīmā, the editor of which we owe to the zeal of Dr. Conti Rossini¹⁾. Since the editor of this interesting document has attached no translation to his publication, I give here an English rendering of the passage in question, which is found on pp. 153—159 (lines 123—284):

“And while they (viz., the nine saints) were in this situation, a certain governor of Aksum came to them and spoke to them saying: ‘There is a large serpent, and he is king over the land Ethiopia, and all governors worship him. And they give him as his tribute a virgin of great beauty: they anoint and adorn her and bring her to the²⁾ serpent and leave her alone. Then the²⁾ serpent devours her. And they have been in this condition for 13 (var. 15; perhaps ተወቃ instead of ተወቃ) years. And the length of this serpent is 170 cubits, and his breadth is 4 cubits, and his teeth measure one cubit. And his eyes resemble a fiery flame, and his eyebrows are black as a raven, and his whole body is like lead and iron. And when he drinks, 107 measures do not suffice him; and they bring him as his food every day 10 cows and 10 bulls, 1000 goats, 100 sheep and ten thousands of ten thousands of birds; and he has a horn on him 3 cubits long³⁾. And when he walks, his noise is heard for an eight days’ journey.’ And when the brethren heard this, they wondered and were astonished and amazed, and they

1) *L’Omlia di Yohannes, vescovo d’Aksum, in honore di Garimā*, in *Actes du XI^e Congrès Intern. des Orientalistes*, Paris 1898, Sect. IV, pp. 139—177.

2) ተወቃ seems to be used here as an article, probably influenced by the Tigray language; cf. W.Z.K.M., XVI, p. 223.

3) See also Zotenberg, *Cat. Ms. Éth. Bibl. Nation.*, p. 251, ba, and Wright, *Cat. Eth. MSS. Brit. Mus.*, p. 17, col. a.

said to the governor: 'Doest thou truly say so?' He answered: 'Yea, truly. If ye do not believe me, let one of you come and see!' Then Abbā Pāntalēōn said to Saint Isaac: 'My son, what shall we do?' And Saint Isaac said to him: 'Let my brother 'Os come and let us go quickly and see the serpent and [know], whether it is true or false. But ye elder men wait for us, till we come back to you, and pray ye!' And these [two] saints and the governor rose and went; and they found the serpent according to his custom walking from place to place with many governors following him and princes walking in front of him. And when they were at a distance of 14 miles, they heard the sound of thunder, and the earth trembled with the sound of thunder, and the mountains were shaken, and the princes adored him. And when the holy Abbā 'Os saw the fearsome serpent, he was afraid and terrified and fell upon his face. But the holy Abbā Isaac stretched his hand forth, raised him and made him stand up and said to him: 'Why art thou afraid, reverend father? Hast thou not heard what Saint John the son of Zebedee said: 'because fear hath torment' ¹⁾? And now let us go back, my brother, to our brethren and let us tell them what we have seen. God's will be done!' And they both went on. And while they were walking, they saw them from a distance and they said to them: '[Are ye] well?' And the holy men said: 'Yea, [we are] well.' Then the others asked them saying: 'Have ye found the story of the serpent [true] or not?' They answered: 'We have seen him as the governor has said. And we have seen, how dreadful and formidable he is, and how the earth trembling could not bear him, nor the mountains encompass him; and this father fell on his face for fear of him.' And the brethren blamed Abbā 'Os

1) 1 John 4:18.

saying: 'Why wast thou afraid and tookest fright at a mortal being? And how when our Lord comes with fear and trembling and awe — what wilt thou say? But now, our brethren, let us pray to the Lord our God and let us beseech him, that we may gain salvation for Ethiopia and that he may make to rule over it a king from Jesse's root and from David's stem, and let us fast day and night.' Thus the saints spoke among one another, and when they had finished their counsel, they went into their dwellings and fasted day and night, and they were all united in mind and thought and heart. And they spread their hands to heaven towards the East, saying: (Here follows a long prayer in which God's great deeds in nature and in history are praised and deliverance from the serpent is asked; ll. 168—208). Thus they continued praying 40 days and 40 nights without tasting food or water, except on 4 sundays, and these were counted with the fasting. And while they were gathered together, Michael and Gabriel, the archangels, came, resembling monks who were strangers, and they said to them *εὐλόγησον* three times. And the saints asked them: 'Who [are ye]?' The angels answered: 'We are servants of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, one God.' They said to them: 'If ye are servants of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, ye are truly our brethren.' And they entered to them and they embraced one another with a spiritual embracing and they stayed with them, speaking of the great deeds of God and words of profit and words of faith and words of the scriptures. And after they had finished speaking with one another, they said to the angels: 'Whence have ye come, our brethren?' They answered: 'From far away.' And they asked them again: 'From what place?' They said to them: 'From Mount Sinai', and continued: 'After God had seen

your labour, he sent us to visit you.' Then they asked: 'How many months ago did ye depart from Mount Sinai?' They answered: 'By the will of God we have come to you in this hour.' When the saints heard this, they rose and praised God and fell down before him. And when the time for the meal had come, Saint Isaac rose and began to wash the feet of Michael, and the holy father 'Os washed the feet of Gabriel. And after they had finished washing the feet of the holy angels and had drunk [the water with] their dust, they reclined for the meal, and the light came down as usual. And before the meal was finished, they heard a voice around them saying: 'Peace be unto you, my beloved ones. I have heard your prayer, and lo, I have sent Michael and Gabriel to you, and they are at your table, and all that you wish, they shall do for you!' When the saints heard this, they left their table and fell down before their lord and praised his wonders. And the saints said to the angels: 'Ye seemed to us to be men like we, our lords!' And the angels said: 'Christ sent us, when he saw your labour and your eminent patience. And now ye will behold the wonders of the Lord. But now, our brethren, peace be unto you!' Thus speaking they were hid from them and ascended to heaven. And the saints wondered and were amazed and astonished by the wonders of the Lord the whole night until morning, and they did not slumber nor sleep. And after that God sent a mighty flash down from heaven upon the cursed serpent and cut him in twelve parts striking him with [his] fiery sword. And the next day, they rose to pray at the time of day-break, and when the sun rose, they finished their prayer, and the 9 brethren were together in one place. (Afterwards Christ visits them and goes with them to see the dead serpent, ll. 245—84)."

Another much shorter version of this story was also published by Conti Rossini. In his *Note Etiopiche*¹⁾ he edited and translated into Italian a legend in the Tigray language which is very closely related to our Tigrē version, as will be seen from the following English translation:

"Going from Adua to Aksum there is plain called ኃሳቦ. Now I asked, saying: 'For what reason is it that they have called it ኃሳቦ (= "he washed him" or "it")?' And some explained [this] to me saying: 'It is told that in Ethiopia formerly a serpent was the ruler of the land. And the people of the country gave him his food in this way: a *gabatā* of milk and a first-born virgin. This, they say, used to be the law of the country for many years. And while this was being done, the [nine] saints passing on their way by [the place] where his food was waiting for him, sat down at the foot of a sycamore tree to be in the shade. And while they were sitting [there], a tear fell upon them. And looking up the saints saw a girl hanging in the sycamore. They asked her saying: 'What art thou?' And she answered them: 'I am a human being.' 'What then art thou doing?' they asked her. 'I have come as tribute to the serpent' said she to them. They asked: 'But where is he?' And she saying: 'Lo, there!' showed him to them. They said to her: 'There near the hill perhaps?' But she said: 'He is what looks like a hill!' And turning their faces towards him they made the sign of the cross with their crosses, and the serpent burst asunder and died, and his blood flowed to ኃሳቦ. The saints said to the plain: 'He has washed thee.' And now they call it ኃሳቦ."

Now it was very well known to the Abyssinian writers

1) *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*, Vol. XI, 1897, pp. 141—156.

that the nine saints had come to their country much later than the time in which they put the beginning of their national history. This fact, among others, must have led to the assumption that the serpent reigned at several different periods. Generally three distinct reigns of King Serpent are mentioned: 1) at the beginning of the history of Abyssinia, when he reigned 400 years; 2) at the time of the ascension of Mary; 3) at the time of the nine saints¹⁾. Of these 1 and 3 are, as we have seen, easily accounted for, but 2 is still unexplained. However this may be, it is certain that the Abyssinians themselves, in later times, often considered the serpent as the embodiment of heathenism, which is very natural, since they always have been familiar with the cult of serpents, at least among their pagan neighbours. This idea is also clearly brought out by the following passage from the Abridged Abyssinian Chronicle²⁾: “[At the time of Abrehā and Aṣbehā] came Abbā Salāmā together with his father, and of the people of Abyssinia one part was under the Mosaic law, the other was worshipping the serpent.” — On the other hand the suggestion made by Pereira³⁾, that the serpent represented in some way foreign influence seems to a certain degree very acceptable; for a similar thing has happened in Persia, where the foreign influence of the Arabs was personified by the dragon⁴⁾. There is of course no internal connection between these two parallels, and Halévy’s derivation of the whole serpent legend from Persia⁵⁾ seems to me highly improbable⁶⁾.

1) Cf. Pereira, *Historia dos Martyres de Nagran*, pp. XLVIII sq.

2) Béguinot, *La Cronaca abbreviata d’Abissinia*, Rome 1901, p. 2.

3) *Mart. de Nagran*, p. LIII.

4) Brown, *A Literary History of Persia*, p. 114.

5) *Revue Sémitique* 1896, p. 261.

6) Cf. also C. Rossini, in *Actes XI^e Congrès Internat. Orient.*, IV, p. 49.

In our Tigrē legend the differences of time have been naively neglected: the saints appear at the time of Solomon, just as the "Ark of Mary" is here supposed to be in the temple at Jerusalem under the reign of this king. Furthermore the nine saints have become seven saints, or, according to the first copy, angels. It was very natural to substitute the sacred number seven for nine, to which Abyssinian superstition does not seem to attach a special meaning; yet we must not forget that even in the "*Gadla 'Aragāwī*" seven saints came to Za-Mikā'ēl and, together with him and Abbā Garimā, who joined them later, after some time finally became nine altogether¹⁾. But a more interesting question in this connection is, how the legend of the Queen of Sheba and that of the dragon were intertwined. It seems to me that here the Tigrē legend has preserved a very old tradition and that we must go back to the South Arabian Bilqīs saga to gain more light on this matter. It is known that according to the Arabic tradition²⁾ Bilqīs killed her predecessor, a very cruel tyrant who ravished the maidens of the country; in order to accomplish her purpose more easily, she promised to marry him, and delivered her country by slaying him on their bridal night. Furthermore we are told by Mas'ūdī, quoted by Rösch on p. 545, that Bilqīs killed the first *tobba*^c, i. e. king of South Arabia, who reigned four hundred years: this coincides very strikingly with the Abyssinian tradition of the length of King Arwē's first reign³⁾. It seems therefore not unlikely that the *tobba*^c who ravished the maidens and then was killed by Bilqīs,

1) Guidi, *Il "Gadla 'Aragāwī"*, R. Acc. dei Lincei, 1894, p. 38.

2) A full account of its different forms was given by Rösch in *Jahrb. f. protestant. Theol.* VI, p. 524 sqq.

3) See above p. 26.

Queen of Sheba, and the *arwē*, who devoured the maidens and met his death through the Abyssinian Queen of Sheba, were originally identical mythological persons. Consequently the connection between the legends of the serpent and of the Queen of Sheba is ancient, and not a new invention of our Tigrē story. An occasional allusion to this connection may be found in the tradition that the people of ክቡር “the South” — whose queen of course was ቅዱስት ክቡር “the Queen of the South” — were worshipping the serpent¹⁾.

Perhaps an equally interesting feature of this part of our legend is the presence of the ass's heel. The Arabic story of Queen Bilqīs tells us that she had very hairy legs, and that she had an ass's hoof. As Rösch has rightly recognized and discussed in detail, this peculiarity classes the queen at once with demoniac beings. For in Semitic popular belief²⁾ hairiness is one of the main characteristics of the demons³⁾, and the ass is — as also in ancient Egypt — very commonly considered a demoniac animal. The ass seems to play quite an important rôle in Babylonian demonology and magical practices; to quote one example, we may recall here the incantations against the female demon Labartu⁴⁾, which were recently published by Myhrmann in the *Zeitschr. f. Assyri.* XVI. There it is said: “Thou shalt make an image of Anu's daughter out of canal-clay; thou shalt make an ass out of canal-clay and give him food” (p. 165), and again (p. 181): “A whore is Anu's daughter among the god's, her brothers; her head is a lion's head, her figure an ass's figure.”

1) Pereira, *Mart. de Nagran*, p. XLVIII.

2) The tail and the hoof of the Christian devil might also be compared here.

3) In the O. T. demons are even called שְׁعִירִים ‘hairy beings’; cf. Robertson Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, New York 1889, p. 113; Wellhausen, *Reste arab. Heidentums*², p. 151—52.

4) About Labartu in the O. T. see Perles in *Oriental. Lit. Ztg.*, 1903, 244—45.

Furthermore we know that according to Arabic lore the *ghūl* had ass's hoofs. And perhaps also the fact that the ass was considered unclean and not allowed to be eaten or immolated, may have something to do with its being the animal of the demons. This prohibition is found, e. g., with the so-called Sabians; see Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier* II, p. 10, 105. Finally we read in the *Physiologus*, a book which though originally written in Greek, contains many Eastern traditions, that the wild ass is an image or a symbol of the devil; see Hommel, *Die aethiopische Uebersetzung des Physiologus*, Leipzig 1877, p. 92, 103. Rösch's conclusion that Queen Bilqīs was originally a demoniac being may now be extended to the Abyssinian Queen of Sheba as well. It is possible that the Bilqīs saga has influenced the Abyssinian legend, but nothing prevents us from assuming that, in popular belief at least, Mākedā has always preserved some of her original mythological traits, in spite of the more rationalistic treatment which her person has undergone in the *Kebra Nagast*.

How it happened that the Queen of Sheba had an ass's hoof, is explained here in quite a characteristic way: a drop of the dragon's blood fell on her heel. It is known that in a number of other cases magical power is attributed to the blood of a dragon. It will suffice to call attention to the '*Lied vom hürnen Sifrit*', according to which Siegfried receives a horny skin by a bath in the dragon's blood. A curious parallel to this from an Lithuanian story was published by Edzardi in *Germania*, vol. XX, 1875, pp. 317—20.

A few more elements in the Tigrē legend may be mentioned here in brief. 1) The tribute which the dragon receives is a first born maiden¹⁾. It is possible that we have here a

1) Cf. the Tigray tale, above p. 25.

reminiscence of the sacrifice of first born children¹). — 2) In vs. 6 we read three plays on words, i. e., the names of the persons are connected etymologically with their actions. This kind of popular etymology is too well known to need any further discussion. It occurs a great many times in the O. T.²), and all the other Semitic peoples are very familiar with it as well as nations outside of the Semitic family. Especially in Abyssinia we meet it often, and the very name *Garimā*, which is connected here with *garramkanī* 'thou hast frightened me', occurs in such a play on words in the *Gadla 'Aragāwī*, ed. Guidi, p. 17, and in a Tigray Legend published by Conti Rossini in his *Note etiopiche* (*Giorn. Soc. Asiat. Ital.*), p. 147, l. 9. — 3) The way in which the dragon is killed characterizes our legend as an expression of popular and naïve reflection. We have seen that in the homily of *Garimā* God kills the serpent after the prayer of the saints, and that in the Tigray legend the saints hold their crosses up, whereupon the serpent dies. But here it seems as if the teller and the hearers wished to see some real heroism and visible physical power: thus the saints are represented as beating the dragon to death with the cross. Undoubtedly archbishop Christian I of Mainz, who had great physical strength, was much more popular because of the mighty club which he wielded on the battle-field than for his spiritual gifts. — 4) A new feature is found in the mention of a girl minister appointed by the Queen of Sheba after her accession to the throne. It is interesting to see how this feature continues throughout most of the legend; for the minister also goes to Jerusalem, has a child by Solomon

1) Cf. Robertson Smith, *I. c.*, p. 445.

2) As to later Hebrew literature cf., e. g., Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge zur semit. Sagenkunde*, Leiden 1893, p. 207.

and finally sends her son to Jerusalem with the son of the Queen. It seems therefore to be an integral part of this story in its present form. I have not met with it in the other legends about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; but parallels from other popular literatures where a contrast is made between the true and genuine son and the rejected son are of course not infrequently to be found. Perhaps the best known are Isaac and Ismael, Jacob and Esau.

*The journey of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon
and her return to Abyssinia.*

(Verses 11—20).

The reason why the Queen of Sheba travels to Solomon is in almost all the other forms of the legend her desire to test or at least to experience his wisdom, of which she has heard so much spoken. The healing of the Queen from her hairiness is known to the Arabs also and is mentioned by Zamājšarī, Ṭabarī and Ibn el-‘Afīr¹⁾; but here it is only an episode and of minor importance. Now in the Tigrē legend this is made the main reason: the Queen of Sheba goes to Solomon only to be cured of her ass's heel. To the minds of a very large class of people all over the world, wisdom, healing-power and sorcery are nearly synonymous, and driving out the devil of disease — for the diseases are caused by or identical with the demons — is the most palpable proof of wisdom. We need not wonder, therefore, that the simple Abyssinian who told our legend, probably considered Solomon only as a great sorcerer, and that the healing-power of this 'king of all demons' impressed itself more deeply

1) See Grünbaum, *Neue Beiträge*, p. 219.

on the mind of the common people than his intellectual wisdom. According to the Arabic story the demons told Solomon that Bilqīs had hairy legs and an ass's hoof, because they were afraid that Solomon would marry Bilqīs and tell her, who was herself the daughter of a Peri or female demon, his secret concerning the demons, so that then the son of both would rule over them. Then they built a palace of glass and made the floor look like flowing water. When Bilqīs entered, she thought it was real water and lifted her garment to wade through. Solomon saw that the demons had spoken the truth: he told Bilqīs at once that there was no water there, and then had a depilatory made by the demons. In Tabarī (I, p. 51¹¹—52¹²) we read that this depilatory, called *nūrah*, was recommended to Solomon by the satans, after he had asked men and djinns in vain, and that the *nūrah* was here applied for the first time. Of all these details none are given in the Tigrē legend. In the latter the queen is healed, as soon as she enters in at Solomon's door, i. e., steps over his threshold. We see again, how great a magical power the threshold is supposed to have. Among the Semites it is believed to be the gathering place of evil spirits; and this may be one of the reasons why in the Christian towns of Syria very many inscriptions with invocations of God or Christ or symbolic disks are carved over the entrance of houses¹⁾. In modern Palestine for instance a mother must not beat a disobedient child²⁾ nor nurse her baby while standing on the threshold. We know, however, that superstitious beliefs of a similar nature are common all over the world.

According to the Tigrē legend the Queen and her minister

1) See *Publications Amer. Archaeol. Expedition*, Part II, pp. 32, 34 annot.

2) Cf. Bauer, *Volksleben im heiligen Lande*, Leipzig 1903, p. 196.

disguise themselves by arranging their hair as men, wearing men's garments and a saber, but are afterwards recognized as women by Solomon. Here again we have an ancient feature, known to the later Hebrew and to the Arabic writers, but omitted in the *Kebrā Nagast*. But there is a characteristic difference. While in Hebrew and Arabic sources the suite of the Queen is disguised and Solomon displays his wisdom by distinguishing the boys from the girls, in the Tigrē legend the Queen and her minister disguise themselves, and Solomon recognizes them in order to wed them. It is very likely, as Rösch has shown¹⁾, that the changing of the clothes in the *Bilqīs* saga is a survival of ancient religious rites²⁾. The meaning of the garments in religious ceremonies has been expounded by Robertson Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, 1889, pp. 416 sq., 432 sq. and by Wellhausen, *Arab. Heidentum*²⁾, pp. 110, 195 sqq.; cf. also Rösch, *l. c.*, p. 553. Another example, which perhaps is less well known, may be cited from the religion of the pagan Galla tribes. Cecchi reports that the pilgrims of the sect of Abba Muda³⁾ wear women's garments during the pilgrimage to the cave of their chief.

Solomon notices that his guests are women first by their shyness in eating and drinking. In a somewhat similar way a Jewish legend⁴⁾ makes him distribute nuts and pastry to the boys and girls, whereupon the boys right away take off their cloaks and spread them out to receive the gifts, whereas the girls in a diffident manner use their kerchiefs for this purpose. We have seen above⁵⁾ that an episode of the

1) *l. c.*, pp. 552 sq.

2) Cf. the often quoted passage Deut. 22:5: The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment.

3) See above p. 18.

4) See Grünbaum, *l. c.*, p. 221.

5) See p. 15.

Kebara Nagast, the story of the water-bowl which was put in the sleeping room, has been stripped of its original meaning and now helps to discover the disguise. This change has scarcely improved the story; for the marriage is now introduced very abruptly.

When the Queen of Sheba and her minister leave, Solomon gives each one of them, according to our legend, a ring and a silver staff (vs. 20). A ring as a token occurs not infrequently in folk-tales, and perhaps we might find here even a reminiscence of Solomon's famous ring¹⁾, by the power of which he ruled over all nature and all spirits. But I have not been able to establish whether the silver staff had originally any special meaning in this connection.

Menelik's journey to Jerusalem.
(Verses 21—29).

After the Queen of Sheba and her minister have returned to Abyssinia, each becomes the mother of a son. The boys grow up with the boys of the country, but are called "fatherless children" by the latter. Hence they ask their mothers about their father and then go to find him. This is a trait not uncommon in popular literature. One example may serve for many others: In a story called "The Tale of King Najib of Jerusalem", which was dictated to me by a native in Jerusalem²⁾, King Najib is brought at night by a demon to Constantinople, into the palace of the princess. He marries the princess that night and leaves her his ring and hand-

1) Grünbaum, *l. c.*, pp. 201, 223 a. o.

2) This and the other Jerusalem tales which I collected are to be published soon by E. J. Brill as Part VI of the *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria*.

kerchief; then the demon takes him back again. The princess gives birth to a boy, and when the latter is grown up, he goes to seek his father, after he has had the following experience: "The next day it-Tâyih (this is the name of the boy) went down to the field to play as usual, and when he found the son of the vizir there, he said: 'Come, let us play together!' But the other boy said: 'My friend, I do not want to play with a boy, who does not know his father.' 'Why? What is the matter?' said it-Tâyih, 'I know my father, *my* father is the king of course.' 'No, no' replied the other, 'the king is thy grandfather, the father of thy mother, but thy father is not known?'"

When the boys are admitted to Solomon's palace, another man is sitting on the throne, whereas Solomon has hid himself in the stable. In our story this is meant to be a test of the boys' intelligence: Menelik has been instructed by his mother, and therefore he does not step up to the throne to grasp the hand of its occupant, i. e., he does not recognize the latter as king; but as soon as he sees Solomon, he recognizes him. This episode seems to be based on the tradition of Solomon's dethronement by the demon *Şahr*; but it has been changed very much, having kept of the original story only the facts that another man was sitting on Solomon's throne and that the king himself was clad in rags. An allusion to this story is to be found in the *Qor'ân*, *sûrah* 38: 33; but it is given in full by the commentators of the *Qor'ân* and by later Arabic authors, who drew their material from Jewish sources. All the different forms of this tradition are given by Grünbaum, *l. c.*, pp. 221 sqq. The principal facts are the following: Sôlomon marries the daughter of the king of Sidon, and his new wife worships the image of her father in So omon's house. For this transgression he

is punished, as follows. He is accustomed to give his magical ring to one of his wives named Amînah, who keeps it while he performs the ritual ablutions. One day in his absence the demon Šâhr comes to Amînah, resembling the king and asks for the ring, which he receives and then seats himself on the throne. But Solomon stripped of all his power and glory wanders about as a beggar, and then takes service with some fishermen. After 40 days, according to the length of time during which the image had been in Solomon's house, the demon flies away and drops the ring into the sea, where a fish swallows it. In the evening Solomon receives this very fish, finds the ring, puts it on his finger and is restored to his former power.

In vss. 27, 28 the Tigrê legend tells a curious event which leads to the return of Menelik to Abyssinia, viz., the story of the cattle pasturing on another man's field. Its appearance here is rather unexpected, but very characteristic. For it shows that the tendency of the Jewish and Arabic legends to represent Solomon as being wiser than his father David has had its influence in Abyssinia, but has here been modified by putting Solomon in David's and Menelik in Solomon's place. Thus here Menelik is the wiser, which is of course very natural on Abyssinian soil. The story from which the episode in question is undoubtedly derived is according to Arabic sources¹⁾ briefly as follows: A man sues another, because the latter's sheep have pastured on his property. The matter is brought before David, and he decides that the sheep should be given to the proprietor of the damaged field. But Solomon although only 11 years of age at that time, says that the man ought to receive only the use of

1) Baidâwî and Zamâjšârî; see Grünbaum *I.c.* p. 189.

the sheep, i. e., their milk, their wool and their young, until the field should be again in the *status quo ante*. This tends to prove — thus is said — that Solomon had received the greater wisdom. — Although no doubt the same tendency underlies this episode in the Tigrē legend, its main object here is to give the reason why Menelik went back to Abyssinia with the Hebrew youths.

The story of the ark.
(Verses 30—35).

It is an ancient tradition at Axum that Menelik took the 'ark of the covenant' with him from Jerusalem and brought it to Axum, where it is now supposed to be in the sanctuary of the church. The details of this tradition given in our legend are of particular interest, but they show again how rude and superstitious ideas obtain among the ordinary Abyssinian 'Christians'. The beliefs connected with the ark at Axum are certainly a survival of heathenism; and perhaps the stones preserved in the ark are themselves sacred stones from the time of paganism, comparable to the black stone at Mekka and to the stones in the original ark of the ancient Israelites. It sounds indeed like fetishism and it reminds us of the sacred chests of the Babylonians and Egyptians with the idols or mystic symbols of their gods¹⁾, when we hear of an ark of Mary and of an ark of Michael. How material the representation of the godhead by the ark is in the mind of the people, is shown by the following. When Mary's ark reaches Axum, it is said to Satan: 'Mary has come to thee' (vs. 34). In exactly the same way the

1) Cf. *Encyclopaedia Biblica* I, coll. 306—8.

Philistines say when the ark of Yahweh reaches the camp of the Israelites: 'God is come into the camp' (I Sam. 4:7).

The Abyssinians make no secret of the theft of the ark, either in the *Kebra Nagast* or in the present legend; thus the ancient Israelitic legend does not hesitate to say that Rachel stole the 'images', i. e. the household-gods of her father (Gen. 31:19 sqq.). The Tigrē legend tells in a very naive way that Solomon wishes to give his son some sort of a shrine, viz., the ark of Michael, but Menelik is not content with this and steals therefore what he considers a much better and more powerful shrine. For how valuable the ark of Mary is, we learn at once in vs. 31: when a storm comes up, Solomon gives order to look for the ark, which doubtless means that the ark is supposed to have power over the elements.

A curious incident is the halting of the ark on its way to Axum. That this is a common tradition, is shown by Conti Rossini, *Beşü'a Amlāk*, Rome, Acc. dei Lincei, 1902, p. 5, ann. 2; but here it is localized at Damba Mićć. The locality given by the Tigrē legend, Qayēh Kōr, which means 'Red Rocks', is mentioned by Conti Rossini, *ib.* p. 9, ann. 2. Of course we know that the ark of the Israelites 'stood' on the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite (I Sam. 6:14); but the situation is entirely different there, and our story, judging at least from the motives of the halting stated here, has probably no connection with the Biblical passage. It is therefore, as it seems, a local Abyssinian tradition, parallels to which may be found in the popular literatures of other peoples. The reason why the ark stood still is the insufficient or perhaps religiously illegal burial of the deacon who had been carrying the ark. The religious law requires that the whole body must be put into the coffin, a law probably

inspired by similar motives as the religious duty among the ancients to bury all the body at the same spot. It is noteworthy that the ark here, as it were, enforces the strict fulfilment of the law.

Vss. 34—35 lead us into an entirely new cycle of legends which are connected here — and perhaps have been so for a long time — with the story of Menelik and the ark: the legends of the fight of Satan against God and of the large buildings of antiquity. Wherever there are ancient ruins, and especially if these ruins are conspicuous, they furnish rich material for legends and sagas. It would be strange, if the huge obelisks at Axum¹⁾ should not have appealed to the imagination and to the spirit of story-telling among later generations. As all over the East, such gigantic structures are believed to have been built not by human hands, but by supernatural powers. It is for instance well known that in Southern Arabia ancient castles and other buildings are said to have been erected by the *djinns*. The same is said again of the awe-inspiring buildings of Palmyra. Also in Persepolis similar tales are told²⁾. Such legends are often very definite in certain details, and in this respect the episode of the big stone, which Satan had raised and then left, and which is yet to be seen (vs. 35), is typical. Now, it is said here that Satan 'built a house in order to fight against God.' This touches upon the very ancient myth of the enmity and the struggle between God and the devil, or between the gods and chthonic powers or giants. And this connection between the building of a huge structure and the war against God seems to be ancient too, although the original legend of the tower of Babylon, which we most naturally bring into

1) Cf. the pictures in Th. Bent's *Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, London 1893.

2) Brown, *Literary History of Persia* p. 112.

comparison here, probably did not contain this feature. But it is significant that in Jewish-Greek writings the tower is regarded as the work of the giants¹⁾, the typical enemies of the ancient Greek gods.

It is the privilege of popular literature and legends to ignore chronology in the freest possible manner: Solomon is a Muhammedan in the tradition of Islam, and here in Abyssinia the primeval battle of Satan against God, Solomon, and the Christian Saints are all made contemporaneous.

1) Gunkel, *Genesis*²⁾, p. 88.

CORRIGENDUM.

Page XI read *Rivista moderna politica e letteraria*, 1902,
instead of *La Rassegna Nazionale*.

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